

**MINUTES
STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COMMISSION ON EMS
NOVEMBER 29, 2000**

Commissioners Present:

Dorothy Bizzini, Ron S. Blaul, Chuck Baucom, EMT-P, Robert P. David, Ramon W. Johnson, M.D., Sterling Johnson, EMT-P, Robert Kaufman, EMT-P, Stephen J. Maiero, EMT-P, Lou Meyer, Janice M. Ogar, R.N., Michael Rossini, M.D., Angelo Salvucci, M.D., Tim Sturgill, M.D.

Commissioners Absent:

David Hoyt, M.D., Babatunde A. Jinadu, M.D., Blair Sadler

EMS Authority Present:

Richard E. Watson, Daniel R. Smiley, Maureen McNeil, Nancy Steiner, Roselyn Cope, Susan French, Michele Handewith, Sheila Keller, Richard McSherry, Sheila Martin, Bonnie Sinz, Miranda Swanson, Connie Telford, Sean Trask, and Lois Williams

Audience Present:

Bob Eisemann, M.D., Kaiser Permanente
Patti Crawford, Tulare County EMS Agency
Virginia Hastings, EMSAAC, Los Angeles County EMS Agency
Robert O'Brien, Fremont Fire Department, California Fire Chiefs Association, Northern Region
Vickie Cleary, Newport Beach Fire Department
Rob Cordray, California Department of Forestry/Office of the State Fire Marshal
Dan Speiss, Northern California EMS Agency
Bonny Martignoni, Coastal Valleys EMS Agency
Diane Fisher, Inland Counties Emergency Medical Services Agency
Doug Buchanan, Mountain-Valley EMS Agency
Steve Andriese, Mountain-Valley EMS Agency
Marilyn Smith, Mountain-Valley EMS Agency
Fred Chavez, Mountain-Valley EMS Agency
Ron Dieckmann, San Francisco General Hospital
Michael J. Harris, EMS Consultant
Jim Pointer, M.D., Alameda County EMS Agency
John Brown, Emergency Medical Services Medical Directors Association of California
Jim Andrews, Fresno/Kings/Madera EMS Agency and Merced County EMS Agency
Vickie Pinette, Sierra-Sacramento Valley EMS Agency
Kevin White, California Professional Firefighters
Jim McPherson, Santa Clara County EMS Agency
Debbie Becker, ETAP

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Michael Osur, Riverside County EMS Agency

Barbara Pletz, San Mateo County EMS Agency

David Nevins, California Ambulance Association

Michael Denton, Fremont Fire Department, California Fire Chiefs Association, Northern Division

Cathy Ord, Long Beach Fire Department

Dan Lynch, Fresno, Kings, Madera EMS Agency

Michael Frenn, Solano County EMS Cooperative

Tom McGinnis, Hall Ambulance Service, Inc.

Chris LeVenton, Monterey County EMS Agency

Pat Kramm, Alameda County EMS Agency

Nancy Lapolla, Santa Barbara County EMS Agency

Barbara Brodfruhner, Ventura County EMS Agency

Jim Schiller, Ontario Fire Department

Ray Ramirez, Ontario Fire Department

Troy Peterson, Marin County EMS Agency

Jeff Eastman, California Fire Chiefs Association, Southern Division

Arthur Hsieh, San Francisco Fire Department

Mike Metro, Los Angeles County Fire Department/California Fire Chiefs Association, Southern Division

Chairman Blaul called the meeting to order at 10:11 a.m.

I. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 29, 2000 AGENDA

Action: Moved (Meyer), seconded (Ogar), passed to approve the agenda

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 27, 2000 MINUTES

Action: Moved (Salvucci), seconded (S. Johnson), passed to approve with the three changes to the Minutes

Commissioner Baucom discussed Page 3 of the Minutes on the second paragraph under Discussion change the word from imaging to trauma care.

Commissioner Salvucci on Page 6 the paragraph starting with Mr. Smiley should be changed. The percentages cited in the paragraph do not add up to 100%.

Commissioner Ogar indicated that on Page 4 under the action item words Vision Funding Lead should be changed to Vision Chairman.

III. CONSENT CALENDAR

Action: Moved (Meyer), seconded (David), the motion passed unanimously to accept Consent Calendar items.

IV. APPROVAL OF 2001 COMMISSION MEETING DATES

Action: Moved (David), seconded (Meyer), motion passed to accept the dates for the 2001 Commission meeting dates.

The dates and locations are as follows:

| | | | |
|------------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------|
| January 24, 2001 | San Diego | September 26, 2001 | Los Angeles |
| March 28, 2001 | Sacramento | November 28, 2001 | San Francisco |
| June 20, 2001 | San Francisco | | |

Discussion:

Commissioner Ogar discussed that June was not the fourth Wednesday of the month. Commissioner Salvucci has a personal conflict with June 27th.

Commissioner Ray Johnson inquired about the EMSAAC/EMDAC meetings being held in June and if this would be a conflict with their annual meeting in June.

V. OPEN NOMINATIONS FOR 2001 COMMISSION OFFICERS

Chairman Blaul reminded the Commissioners that the current chair has spent 2 years in the position and is not eligible to be re-nominated.

Commissioner David nominated Commissioner Salvucci for the Chair of the EMS Commission.

Commissioner Baucom nominated Commissioner Maiero for the Administrative Commission.

Commissioner Maiero nominated Commissioner Meyer for the Administrative Committee

Commissioner Salvucci nominated Commissioner Ogar for the Administrative Committee.

Commissioner Sterling Johnson nominated Chuck Baucom for Vice-Chair of the EMS Commission.

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VI. REPORT ON STATUS OF THE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM PILOT PROJECT

Ms. Carol Biancalana of the EMS Authority gave a presentation on Communications System in California those existing throughout the state and the planned changes to the new statewide system.

Discussion:

Chairman Blaul indicated that many Public Safety agencies had invested a lot of resources in the 800 frequency. Will this new statewide plan with the use of the 700 frequency be compatible with the 800 frequencies?

Ms. Biancalana indicated that ten new med channels in the 700 range have been requested by the EMS Authority. Other than in rural areas where they use the UHF 460, it is going to be a vibrant system because the needs of the State are very different in different areas.

Chairman Blaul asked if the U.S. Forest Service has been involved in the development of this system?

Chief Deputy Director Dan Smiley responded that this effort involves state agencies only. This is primarily a state project involving Highway Patrol, Department of Forestry and Fire Service and Department of General Services Telecommunications staff. We are hoping to get EMS on a statewide communications system so that any ambulance or EMS vehicle to move up and down the state will have common frequencies to talk to each other.

Commissioner Ogar complimented Ms. Biancalana on the report. She asked about the wireless 911 or E-911 system and what type of discussion has been going on related to access to 911? She was aware that this is not the issue but wanted to know if Ms. Biancalana could have this agendaized for our next EMS Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Salvucci expressed his opinion that if he were to call 911 from his cell phone right here, he would be connected to the CHP and just how appropriate is that?

VII. UPDATE ON VISION PROJECT CONFERENCE

Ms. Miranda Swanson gave her report on the Conference. As you know, the Vision Project Conference is tomorrow at this hotel. In the last several months her office has been working on the preparations for the conference. Their preparations are complete. We are expecting approximately 150 individuals.

The Vision Leadership Team met on November 3, 2000. They focused mainly on conference planning.

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They will also be meeting in the month following the conference to analyze all of the comments we have received and the input from the different constituent groups at the conference.

The six committees' status reports will be presented tomorrow at the Conference Opening.

The conference has helped all of the committees it gives a point in time that we have to have a summary ready for everyone to see.

Chairman Blaul thanked Miranda and the rest of the EMS Authority staff for all their hard work and they have done a really good job. In 1999, we received marching orders from the EMS community that said go forth and deliberate and work on EMS in these various areas. The purpose of this conference is to give those same people a report on how we have done and where we are going and what we have done. It is also an opportunity to do a mid-course adjustment. This is an important point in the progress of the Vision Process.

Interim Director Watson complimented Miranda and Sheila Keller who have been working incredibly hard in the last three or four weeks on this conference and that he has been very pleased with the way this has been shaping up.

VIII. REPORT ON HOSPITAL OVERCROWDING/AMBULANCE DIVERSION

Michael Osur, a member of the Hospital Overcrowding Task Force, gave a report to the Commission. The EMS Authority convened a statewide group to deal with Hospital Overcrowding situation based on the 1997 flu crisis. There is a white paper on EMSA's website that has actually gotten nationwide review and that has many recommendations for both EMS and hospitals. Some of the recommendations are easily remedied and some are more difficult. Currently, the EMS Authority and the LEMSAs are working with DHS's Disease Control group in which there are now 5 counties reporting daily on their EMS call volume and their hospital diversion numbers. The Disease Control group is using this as a baseline to generate precursor information to predict the impact of the flu season on the hospitals.

The flu vaccine availability has been delayed and is just becoming available to the public.

Commissioner Baucom requested that Mr. Osur summarize the EMSAAC discussion on this issue.

Mr. Osur indicated that each EMS system had some way of dealing with hospital overcrowding or diversion. Some are more successful than others. There is an absolute controversy over whether this is an EMS systems problem. Some believe it is a hospital problem while others believe it is an EMS system problem. There is no one simple answer.

Commissioner Baucom replied that one of the recommendations that he made to Dr. Brown was that EMS Systems need to use the "White Paper" to ensure that their hospitals are taking those preparatory steps to gear up to manage the volumes that they are seeing prior to just automatically turning on the diversion switch.

Michael Osur responded that the group also felt strongly that hospital administrators needed to be included whenever a diversion decision is made and not just at an ER level. The Task Force encourages all the EMS agencies to set up a meeting with their hospital association, their local DHS Licensing and Certification people, the hospital administrators and their EMS agency to talk about the preparations that need to be made to address the flu season.

Chairman Blaul asked how often are these suggestions implemented in real life? He knows that in Orange County no one is paying attention to who is on diversion more than the neighboring hospital. A cascade effect develops in which they go on diversion to protect themselves from getting all of the patients. And when they are all on diversion there suddenly is no diversion. He believes that many of the facilities are not implementing the recommendations in the "White Paper".

Commissioner Ogar responded that some of the things that came out of the discussion yesterday were that agencies need to encourage planning. In San Diego County, that was the topic after the last episode in 1997, we did get together and plan with San Diego EMS staff that they formalize training to prepare for the flu season. It was the recommendation of this Task Force to develop plans for high census to create an incidence command system methodology of fieldwork similar to a disaster. Many facilities have High Census plans. The problem is that the diversion is used for a normal emergency department situation. What we are talking about is flu that is a high census situation. Many hospitals are not encouraged to use their "high census plans".

Commissioner Maiero indicated that one of the success stories of Contra Costa County is that they were fortunate enough to have an advocate on the County Board of Supervisors for health care that brought to bear tremendous political pressure to the hospitals not to act independently any more. Even though the administrators and prehospital system people feel that they may be part of the system, you have to elevate that discussion to a higher level to accomplish anything. Had it not been for efforts by the nursing unions, the advocate on the County Board of Supervisors, and the press involvement, they really would have had to push the hospitals to come to the table for discussion. Once they did, the benefit that was realized was well worth the effort.

Commissioner Ray Johnson responded that two things are going to become obvious this winter. The first is that Orange County voted to pass Proposition H which was a ballot initiative to use Tobacco Tax money to

shore up the failing healthcare system. The County Board of Supervisor's decided to challenge that even though the initiative passed with more than 55% of the vote, which makes healthcare political. What he suspects is happening, should there be a consensus period, is that the people will now see the healthcare industry demonstrate to the Board of Supervisors exactly why they need that money. The second thing is that there is a strategy around diversion and that is to go on internal disaster as Commissioner Ogar mentioned. He thinks we have not seen that mushroom yet. Should we have a high census winter, you will see the next phase of hospitals' strategy will be to get their own diversion policy.

Commissioner Kaufman responded that you could eliminate a part of this problem by reeducating the physician not to have people go into the Emergency Department or call 911 for patient triage.

Commissioner Baucom responded that it is not really the colds and flu season that is causing the problem. It is the heart attacks and strokes that are waiting in the Emergency Departments to get upstairs. It is really a CCU/ICU issue. Merced County met last week with our hospitals and asked them to fix the problem.

Commissioner Ogar responded that data collection needs to identify when the hospitals are busy and when it is turning into an undeclared internal disaster.

IX. HCFA UPDATE

Mr. Smiley addressed the Commission. He reminded the commission that there were three letters in the packet on this issue. One is the letter Chairman Blaul sent to the Governor on the negative impact of HCFA Ambulance Fees on the state healthcare system. The other letters were from Richard Watson to the Health Care Financing Administration and from Glen Rossili, Undersecretary at the California Health and Human Services Agency dated November 10, 2001 to HCFA on the impact of the fees on the State.

Commissioner Meyer indicated that the comment period did close on November 13th. He thanked the EMS Authority and the Commission as well as the associations for their responsiveness on this situation. There were several thousand responses. The only information he was able to glean from Washington was that there was a carrier education seminar was held on the November 17th in which the carriers told HCFA that they would not be able to implement the HCFA regulations until at least April 1, 2001. We are still working with members of Congress to try to push the issue. He is going to Washington, D.C. to work on this issue. The good news is that no final rule has been published. He again thanked everyone who participated in sending in their comments.

Commissioner David commended the Authority in getting a letter from the Undersecretary, which is not an easy accomplishment.

Interim Director Watson indicated that many individual fire departments sent their comments and the Undersecretary's letter was overnighted to the Governor's office in Washington, D.C. and then hand-carried over to HCFA.

Commissioner Meyer indicated that the negotiated rule committee has requested to reconvene to deal with the issues since what they felt was being decided and what came out on paper were not the same.

X. UPDATE ON ACLS

Dr. Tharratt, Medical Consultant to the EMS Authority, gave a presentation to the Commission on the new ACLS Guidelines distributed by the American Heart Association. Dr. Tharratt called to everyone's attention that these guidelines are becoming international and allows the use of non-FDA approved drugs which are currently being used in Europe. He broke down the Guidelines recommended procedures of the use of drugs into their Classes and explained the subtle differences in the rating classification.

Commissioner Ray Johnson thanked Dr. Tharratt for his presentation and reminded the audience that they should review the Guidelines and the evidence for themselves and come to their own conclusions. He thanked Dr. Tharratt again for his presentation.

XI. REPORT ON PEPP PROGRAM

Dr. Ron Dieckmann gave a presentation on the Pediatric Education for the Pre-hospital Professional Program (PEPP), which he developed with his colleagues. The course includes videos and slides. The program is now sponsored by the AAP.

XII. INTERFACILITY TRANSFER TASK FORCE

Interim Director Watson addressed the Commission and indicated this is not an action item. He brought to the attention of the Commission the membership list for this Task Force that he is considering. He felt CAA should have a representative and that EMSAAC should have two representatives, one for rural and one for urban area. Some suggestions at the EMSAAC meeting, yesterday, were that the EMS Authority add a Northern California Hospital Association representative and a Southern California Hospital Association representative, another was that a CMA representative be added; still another that children be represented as well as trauma, and the last suggestion was that law enforcement have a representative from dispatch. His initial consideration was for a Task Force of 28 members. He will now add the additional six. This will be a total of 34. Interim Director Watson indicated that the EMS Authority would not like to disenfranchise anyone who was interested in being on the Task Force. He asked the Commissioners if they had any additions they would like to see on the list.

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Commissioner Meyer asked that the EMS Authority list CAA, not private ambulance on the list.

Interim Director Watson indicated that the first meeting of the Task Force will be on January 30, 2001. He suggested that we routinely keep this item on the agenda so that the EMS Authority can keep the Commissioners up to date on the progress of this Task Force.

Chairman Blaul agreed that this would be a good idea.

XIII. EMS Authority Progress Report

Interim Director Watson reported that the Legislative issues are over at Agency and the Department is awaiting their approval.

Poison Control Funding has been approved by the California Medical Assistance Commission (CMAC) for an additional \$2.7 million. In the future, the Department may not have the support from CMAC as they will be replacing four of its members on the Board. We should be prepared to talk to the Governor on this funding.

One item not listed under the Progress Report is the Pertrach Issue. Over half a year ago, I sent out a memo regarding the use of Pertrach and that it will discontinue effective December 31, 2000. I have not received any letters regarding this situation.

Leonard Inch addressed the Commission to give the status of the Trauma Funding Project. The project is continuing to progress. We have a draft of the "White Paper" out. We have one more meeting planned for December. That should finalize our "paper". We have gotten additional financial information from the hospitals. We are continuing work with Southern California Hospital Association and with Commissioner Bob David of the Northern California Hospital Association. We are going to try to set up a meeting with consultants and the Hospital Association to finalize the financial piece in this. He means the cost of providing indigent care in California. We have a very good relationship with both CAL-ACEP and the CMA. They have been working on this project with us very well. We intend to get this "White Paper" out the very first of January to coincide with the reconvening of the California Legislature. We will be having a press conference to release the "White Paper". Funding is a large issue in the emergency department piece.

The timing of the release of this "White Paper" is certainly very good while the Los Angeles trauma crisis still continues to loom and its six-month contract coming up soon, this is not just a Los Angeles issue. It is a statewide issue. He appreciated Ray Johnson's help and anyone else in the room who also helped on this project. Dr. Hoyt has contributed some financial information regarding trauma billing charges versus cost. Dr. Sturgill has also helped occasionally on this project by contributing advice to this committee.

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Interim Director Watson informed the Commission that there was information distributed to them today regarding an issue that Commissioner David wanted to address regarding Jury Duty in Kern County for nurses as well as prehospital staff. Commissioner David indicated this is just an informational item in which a Kern County EMS Agency letter addressed to the presiding judge of the Superior Court asking the judge what could be done regarding the nursing shortage and the jury duty issue.

XIV. OPEN COMMENTS

Ms. Emily Wilcox addressed the Commission regarding the impact of traffic calming devices on emergency response. Because of her disability she has researched the types of traffic calming devices being used in communities. The damage on fire apparatus is very serious. These devices will limit response times and we know that firefighters have sustained injuries when responding to emergencies. She does not understand how OSHA allows this to continue. Obviously, this is a very serious problem especially for a disabled person.

Commissioner Salvucci asked Ms. Wilcox what she would like the Commission to do for this issue.

Ms. Wilcox responded that she would like to see the Commission address the impact that these devices have on a community-wide risk management basis. The public needs to be informed that these devices are not really increasing safety in the community. In Berkeley, there is a moratorium on traffic calming devices because there was a fire that happened to cause a huge delay in the response of numerous fire vehicles because of these devices. She asked that the Commission analyze this issue and make the Commission's opinion known.

Chairman Blaul adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.